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Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Use of the United Nations Logistics Base to provide efficient and economical communications and information technology services, as well as other services, for United Nations peacekeeping and Headquarters clients

Report by the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report presents information on the use of the United Nations Logistics Base to provide efficient and economical communications and information technology services, as well as other services, for United Nations peacekeeping and Headquarters clients. The General Assembly is requested to take note of the report

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I. Background

1. The United Nations Logistics Base, located in Brindisi, Italy, has been in operation since late 1994 undertaking tasks related to assets management, including refurbishment, maintenance and storage of serviceable assets from liquidating field missions, and providing global communications support for United Nations operations through a global satellite network. Over time the core functions of the Logistics Base grew to include maintaining a strategic reserve of equipment, a training centre and expanded information and communications technology services to peacekeeping missions, offices away from Headquarters, agencies, funds and programmes.

2. The Secretary-General in his report (A/59/703) had recommended against relocation of procurement and other logistics functions to the Logistics Base as that would have a negative impact on the overall capacity of the Organization to deploy new missions rapidly and effectively and to provide efficient logistical support to ongoing peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions. The General Assembly, in its resolution 59/299, of 22 June 2005, requested the Secretary-General to undertake further analysis of how the logistics base could best be utilized to provide efficient and economical communications and information technology services, as well as other services, for United Nations peacekeeping and Headquarters clients.

3. The Secretariat conducted a review of its peacekeeping operations and identified the functional areas that could be undertaken at the Logistics Base to provide efficient and economical service to the Organization.

II. Functions proposed for establishment at the United Nations Logistics Base during fiscal year 2006/07

Aviation safety

4. A Regional Aviation Safety Office is to be established in Brindisi to monitor closely and oversee the safety issues for aircraft deployed in the peacekeeping missions. The establishment of this office was recommended by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (A/59/347) and details are included in the 2006/07 cost estimates for the Logistics Base (see A/60/711).

Integrated training service

5. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations is also proposing to create a Training Delivery Cell at the Logistics Base, augmenting training resources to be transferred from United Nations Headquarters. This relocation is expected to result in cost savings by increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of peacekeeping training along with facilitating increased training in cooperation with Member States. The details of this Cell are included in the 2006/07 cost estimates for the Logistics Base.

III. Functions proposed for establishment at the United Nations Logistics Base during fiscal year 2007/08

Air transport

6. There has been a significant increase in the aviation fleet of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in recent years. Currently, the Department deploys 208 air assets in 15 field missions, compared with 126 in 2001. These air assets service more than 450 airfields, helipads and landing sites. This increase has necessitated the strengthening of the Department's aviation programme for commercially contracted and Government provided air assets by establishing a Strategic Operations Centre to maximize the global use of United Nations air assets. It is proposed that the Centre be established at the Logistics Base and consist of the following units:

(a) **The Strategic Air Operations Centre**, which would undertake strategic oversight of the Department's aircraft operating intramission flights, including supporting special flights. Brindisi, with its central location in terms of time zones, would greatly increase the interaction with the mission aviation operations. The Centre would also analyse the aircraft usage reports to ensure efficient fleet management, contract performance and compliance with the United Nations charter agreements. The Centre would include a global flight following system in support of the regionalization concept of the United Nations air assets. This would greatly enhance air safety and ensure a proper tracking and management of peacekeeping air assets. All strategic cargo and passenger air lift would be supported in terms of flight planning and coordination through the operational control system. The above unit would be staffed by three personnel (2 P-3/P-2 posts and 1 General Service post). New posts would be requested for these personnel in the context of the 2007/08 budget for the Logistics Base.

(b) **The Aviation Quality Assurance Programme**, which would assess the effectiveness and competence of the aviation assets and related air/ground support services against international and Department of Peacekeeping Operations aviation standards. The assessment would cover both vendors currently doing business with the United Nations and those vendors who were registered with the Organization to provide a larger pool of vendors. The Programme would be expected to undertake 50 assessments each year and would be in line with recent recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (as contained in its report A/59/347) and is pursuant to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/57/711). The Programme would be staffed by two Air Transport Officers (at the P-3 level) to be funded through new posts which would be requested in the 2007/08 budget for the Logistics Base.

Engineering

7. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations proposes the establishment of a Central Design Unit in Brindisi to reduce or eliminate the requirement for these skills in many missions as well as to standardize designs and drafting of accommodation and other engineering work. The Unit would be responsible for preparing the designs, statements of works, schedules of quantity and engineering drawings for projects identified by the missions, ensuring that the designs meet the

local code requirements and have minimal impact on the environment. They would prepare all the documentation required for the mission to call for tenders, conduct, in conjunction with the Procurement Service, the pre-bid meeting, which includes the site inspection by the bidders. While the contracts would be enforced and supervised by the missions, the Unit would assist with any changes to the specification that might be required during the construction phase.

8. It is envisaged that the Unit would be staffed by four personnel (1 P-4 (Chief), 1 P-3 and 2 local staff). The Professional post requirements would be met through the proposed redeployment of posts from existing missions (the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)) while the request for two local General Service posts would be included in the 2007/08 budget. It is likely that the Unit would use the services of specialists/consultants on an as-required basis.

Geographical Information System (GIS)

9. To establish the Department's global Geographical Information System (GIS) capacity, in particular in support of rapid mission start-up and improvement of field mission operational readiness, it is proposed that a Geographical Information System Centre be established in Brindisi. The Centre would undertake the following functions:

(a) Acquire/produce base geo-data for the start-up of missions and mission planning;

(b) Maintain a data repository, including a backup/replica of the mission and Headquarters data;

(c) Enhance geo-information flow between missions and United Nations Headquarters;

(d) Provide on-demand geographic analysis and maps, in particular for mission planning and start-up;

(e) Provide GIS application services, such as web mapping, using various applications;

(f) Provide GIS, remote sensing, global positioning system (GPS) and mapping-related training;

(g) Provide logistics and requisitions support for start-up missions;

(h) Deploy a GIS start-up team to provide on-site assistance during the start-up of mission GIS units.

10. The Centre would be staffed by eight personnel (1 P-3, 1 P-2, 1 Field Service and 3 local staff, augmented by 2 international contractors). It is proposed that the two Professional posts and one Field Service post be redeployed from existing missions (UNMIS, MONUC and United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB)) while the requirement for three local staff posts would be included in the 2007/08 budget for the Logistics Base.

IV. Recomposition of strategic deployment stocks

11. Strategic deployment stocks are an integral part of rapid deployment of a new mission and the Logistics Base plays a very active role in the storage, preparation and dispatch of items to the missions. In 2005, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations undertook an extensive review of the composition of strategic deployment stocks to ensure that this capability would be more dynamic, flexible and responsive in the light of the lessons learned from the recent surge in mission deployments as well as changes in the operational environment.

12. The major improvements involve increased capacities to support the material requirements of new minimum operating safety standards; increase in the variety and quantities of fuel equipment to support the rapid deployment of increasing numbers of aircraft in remote locations; and creation of the second "fly-away kit" to provide the capacity to support multiple rapid deployments of new or expanding peacekeeping operations.

13. The Logistics Base continues to play a significant and critical role in receiving and preparing these assets for deployment in the field missions.

V. Communications and information technology

14. The Secretariat continues to expand its current operations in the Logistics Base to meet the evolving and increasingly complex information needs of field missions and satisfy disaster recovery and business continuity requirements within infrastructure limitations. A centralized data backup system between the field missions and the Logistics Base and the Logistics Base and New York and vice versa is in place. Other expansion projects include the centralization of information systems utilizing web technologies, the transfer of all critical information and communications technology infrastructure and equipment to a secure and fault-tolerant hardened facility and an expansion of the video bridge to facilitate secure videoconferencing. The Secretariat is also in the process of obtaining ISO 27000-information security management certification for the information and communications technology infrastructure and operations at the Logistics Base.

15. Centralizing infrastructure leads to efficiency gains in resource utilization and improves monitoring and management of activities. However, it also introduces a single point of failure. Any catastrophic event in Brindisi, natural or man-made, would result in United Nations operations losing access to all data and information and communications technology services. This risk was highlighted by the Office of Internal Oversight Services in its management audit of the information and communications technology of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations conducted in the fall of 2005.

16. To address this critical issue, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations is proposing the establishment a secondary active communications facility and a disaster recovery and business continuity centre for information and communications technology. This would ensure the safety of the United Nations information/data assets in the event of a catastrophic incident and provide continuous voice, data and video services in cases of short-term disruptions. Proposals from Member States are currently being evaluated with a final

recommendation to be submitted to the legislative bodies at the resumed session of the General Assembly.

VI. Action to be taken by the General Assembly

17. The General Assembly is requested to take note of the report of the Secretary-General.